

# Where's My Flow?

## Holistic Content Design

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Level Designer, Disney Mobile





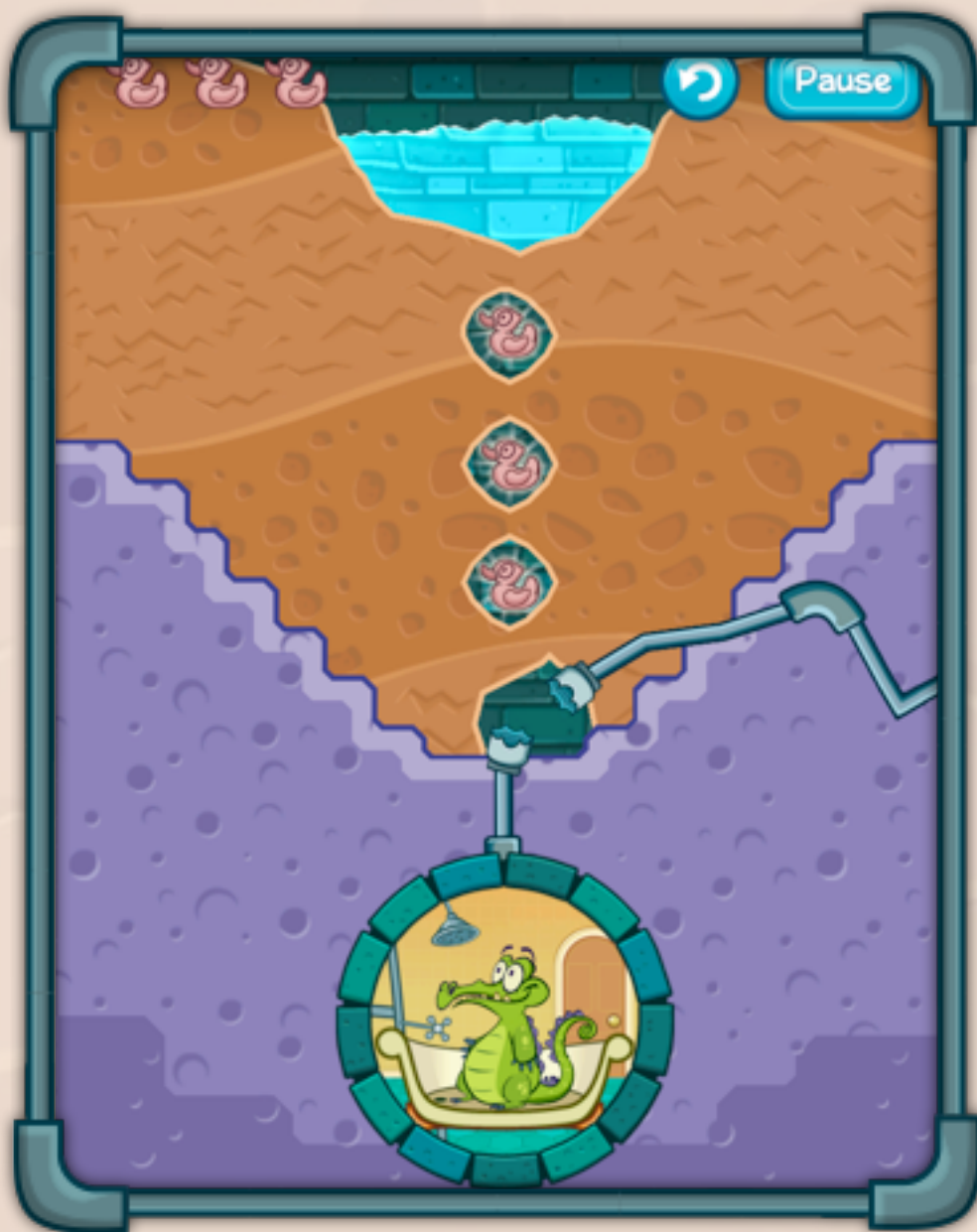
# Who Are You?







# What Game Was That?







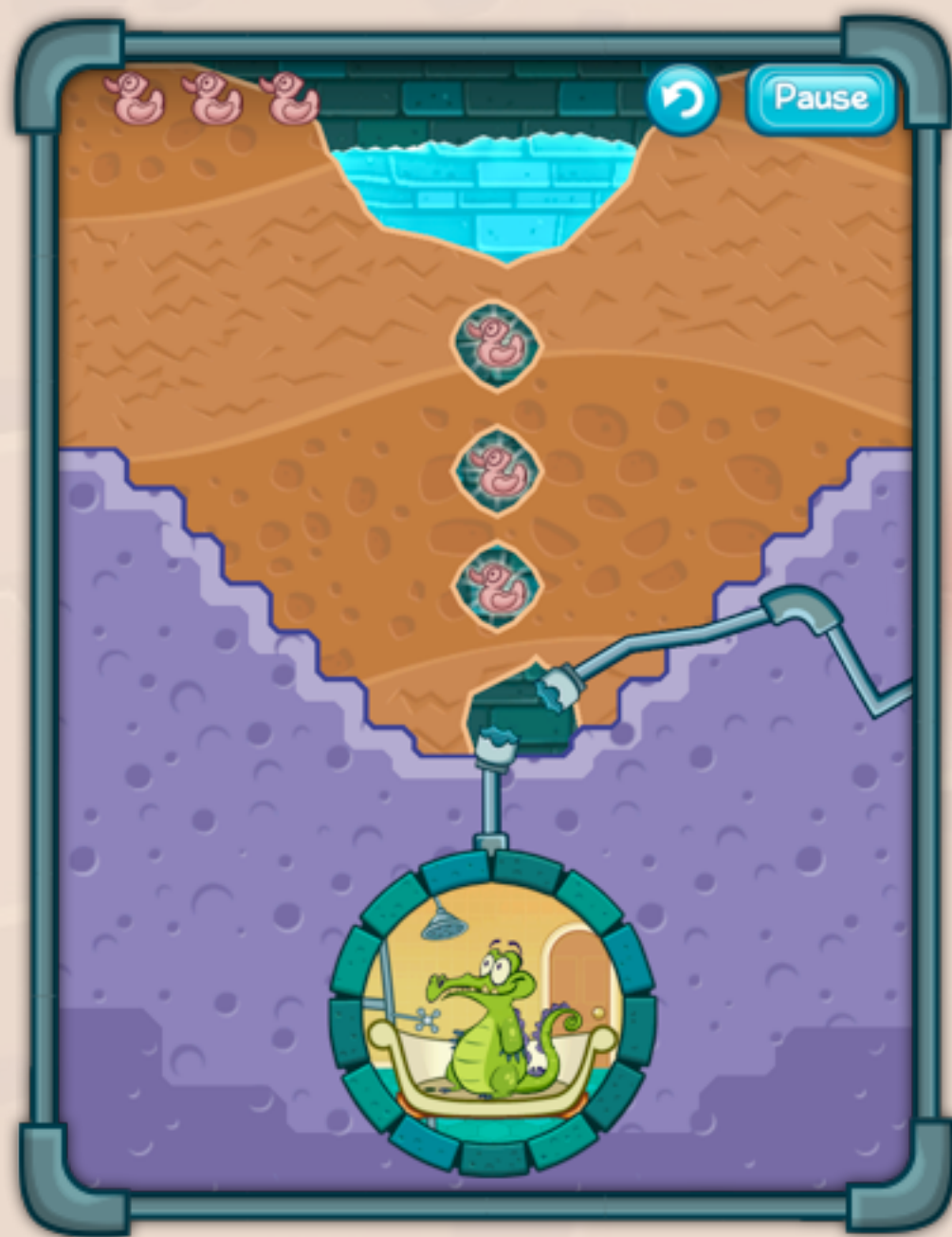




Plus Shawn, not pictured



# Level vs Pack



VS







# Level vs Pack

Song

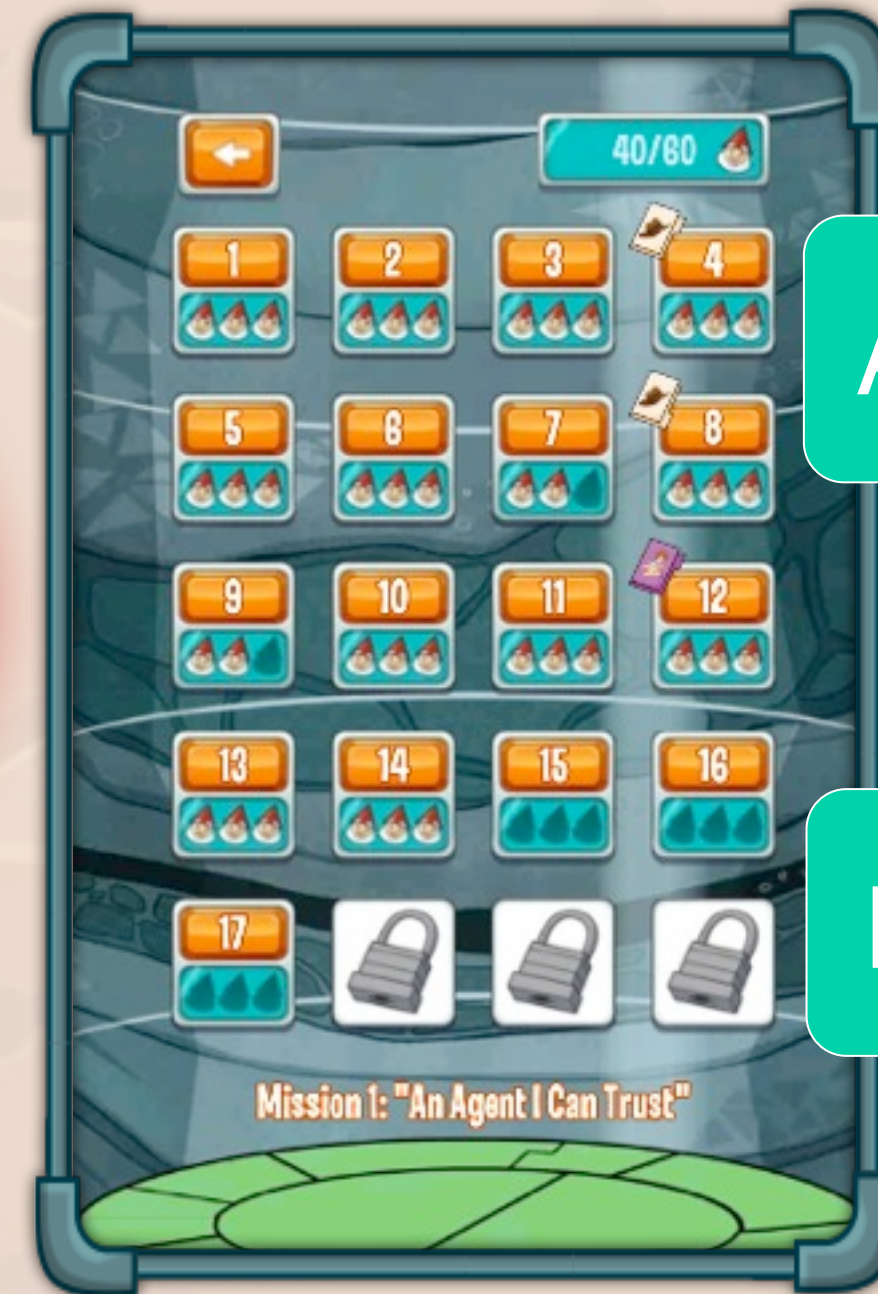
Chapter



VS

Album

Book







# Process

- Brainstorm (meeting)
- Create (2 weeks)
- Pack (meeting)
- Playtest (4 weeks)





# Step 1: Brainstorm Meeting





# Step 1: Brainstorm

- Start with a plan
  - Feature
  - Theme
  - Story
  - Anything





Fans!





What happens  
when fans cross  
each others'  
paths?







Can you use fans to control water instead of digging?



# Goal Statements

Summarize level goals in simple sentences

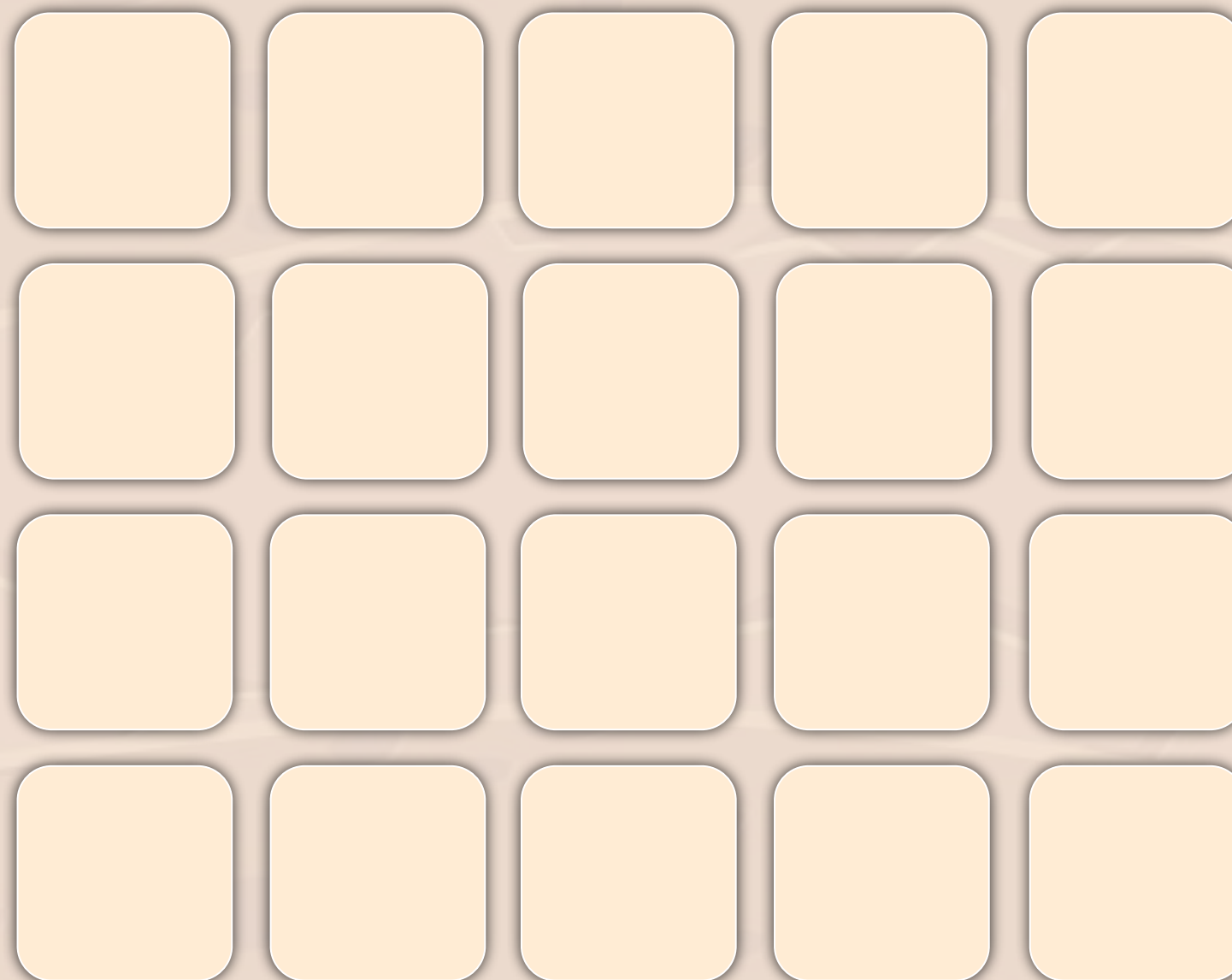
How do fans and switches interact?

What happens when fans cross each others' paths?

Can you use fans to control water instead of digging?



# Visual Layout





# Visual Layout

Teaching







# Teaching

Intro New Feature	New Feature + Old		New Feature + Old	New Feature + Old
	Hard Trick w/ New		Hard Trick +Old	



# Teaching

Intro New Feature	New Feature + Old	Practice	New Feature + Old	New Feature + Old
Practice	Hard Trick w/ New	Practice	Hard Trick +Old	Practice or Exam





Intro New Feature	New Feature + Old	Practice	New Feature + Old	New Feature + Old
Practice	Hard Trick w/ New	Practice	Hard Trick +Old	Practice
		Levitate	No Digging	Suck Water Up



# Brainstorm Results

Intro New Feature	New Feature + Old	Practice	New Feature + Old	New Feature + Old
Practice	Hard Trick w/ New	Practice	Hard Trick +Old	Practice
		Levitate	No Digging	Suck Water Up
	Hard	Harder	Hardest	Goof Off





# Pack 8: Caution to the Wind

Fans	Fan + Switch	Fan Power Varies	Fans + Other Fans	Multiple Fans
Vacuum	Fan + Poison	Practice Circular	+ Balloon	Multi-Switch
Practice Timing	Adv: Bridges	Practice Circular	Lurval: Slam down	Lurval: World
Lurval: Suck up	Fans Bad	Hard	Harder: Lurval	Hardest



## Step 2: Create





## Step 2: Create

- Start with the goals set in the brainstorm
- See where it goes from there

How do fans and switches interact?

What happens when fans cross each others' paths?

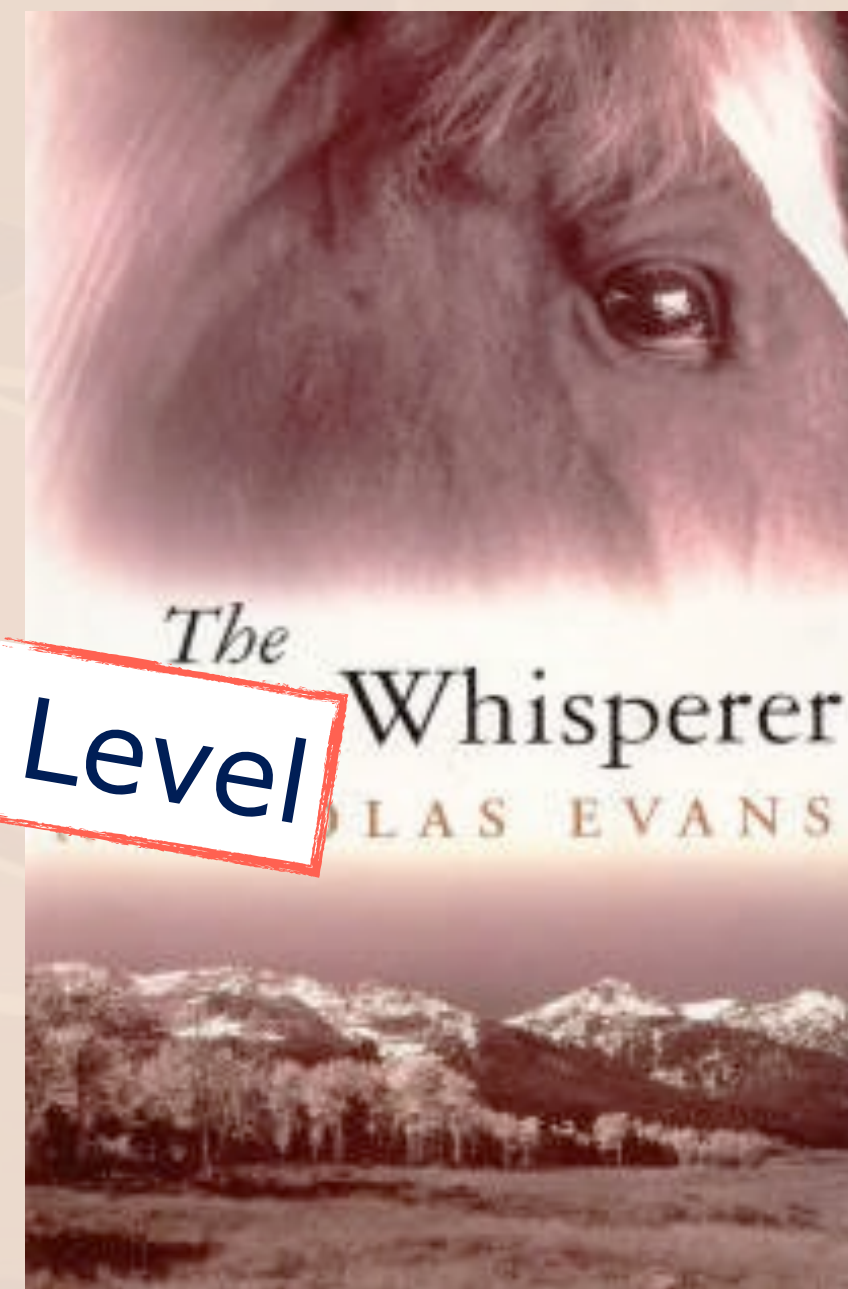
Can you use fans to control water instead of digging?



# Creative Freedom

- Know the goal, BUT
- Go where the level needs to go
- Level goals (fun, etc.) trump pack goals

VS







# Step 3: Review Meeting



# Step 3: Pick a Pack

(of Pickled Peppers)

- Goals:
  - Review
  - Organize into pack

Intro New Feature	New Feature + Old	Practice	New Feature + Old	New Feature + Old
Practice	Hard Trick w/ New	Practice	Hard Trick +Old	Practice
		Levitate	No Digging	Suck Water Up
	Hard	Harder	Hardest	Goof Off







Intro New Feature	New Feature + Old	Practice	New Feature + Old	New Feature + Old
Practice	Hard Trick w/ New	Practice	Hard Trick +Old	Practice
		Levitate	No Digging	Suck Water Up
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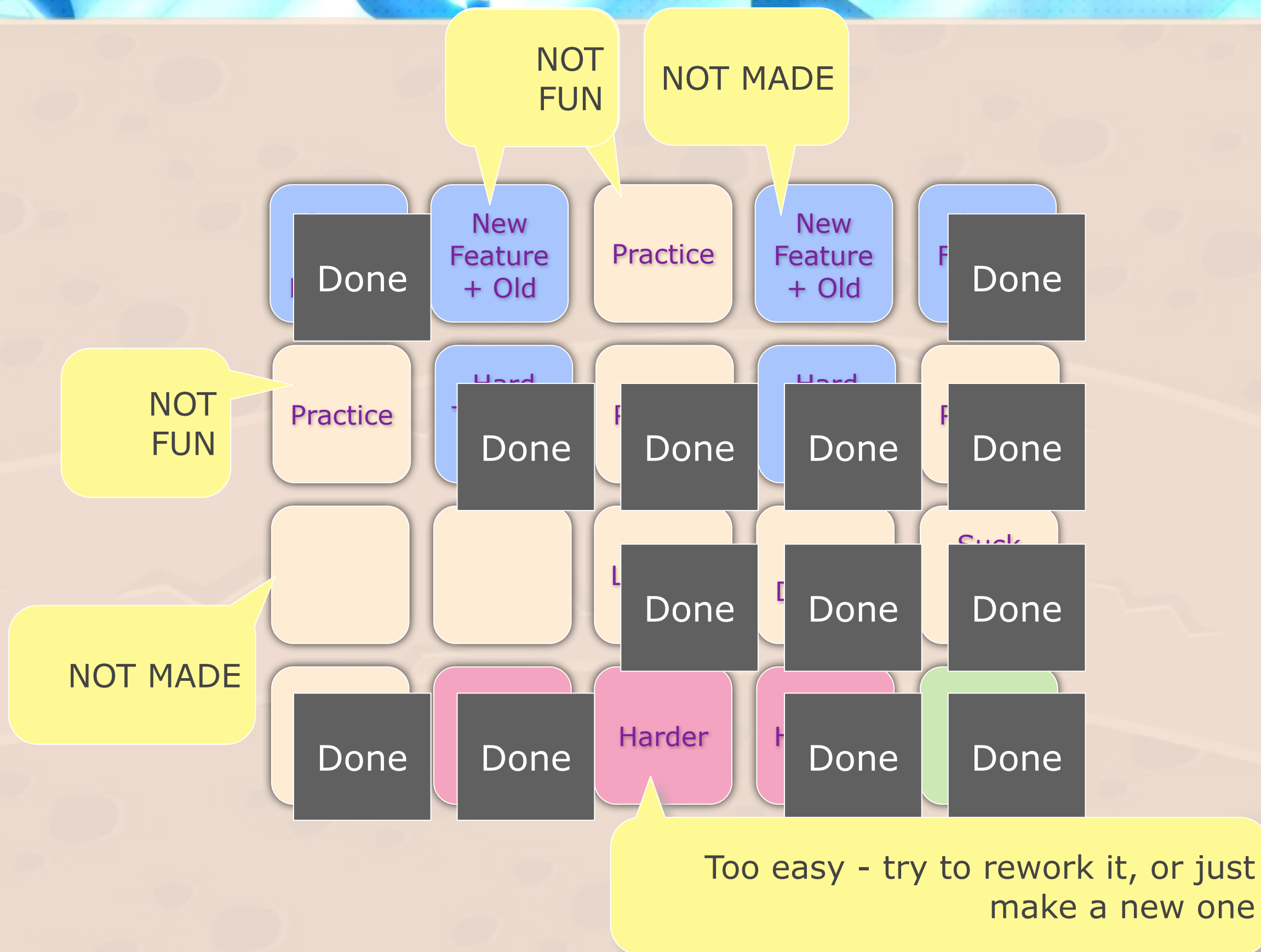
















# Review Criteria

## Level Goals:

- Fun
- Communication
- Cheese-proof



# Review Criteria

## Pack Goals:

- Teaching
- Variety
- Difficulty

## Level Goals:

- Fun
- Communication
- Cheese-proof





# Pack Goals Level Goals

- Level Goal:
  - Is this level fun?
- Pack Goal:
  - Why does this level exist?

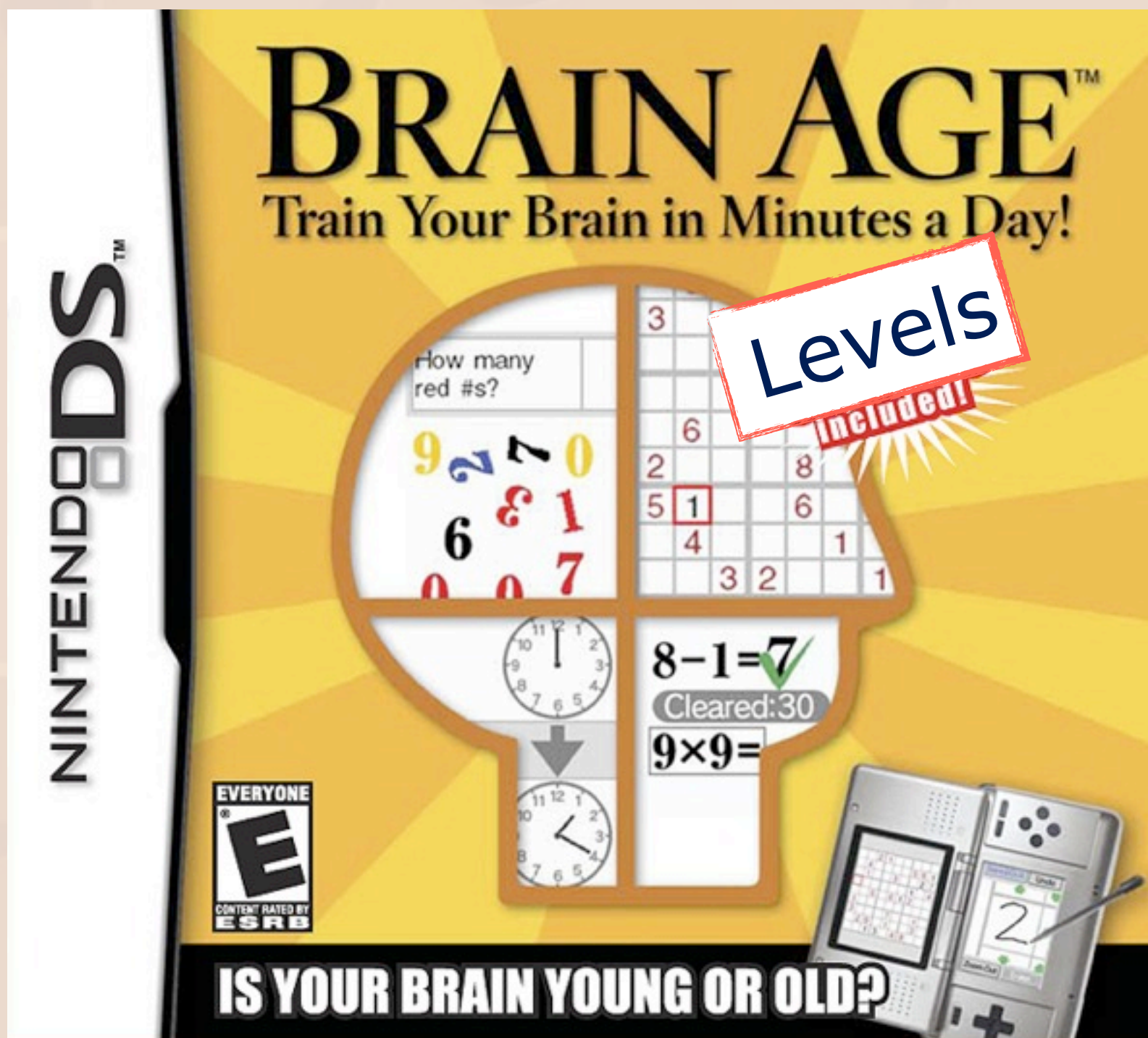


# Pack Goal: Teaching



# Teaching

- All design is teaching
- Not all levels with a feature teach that feature





# Bad Teaching







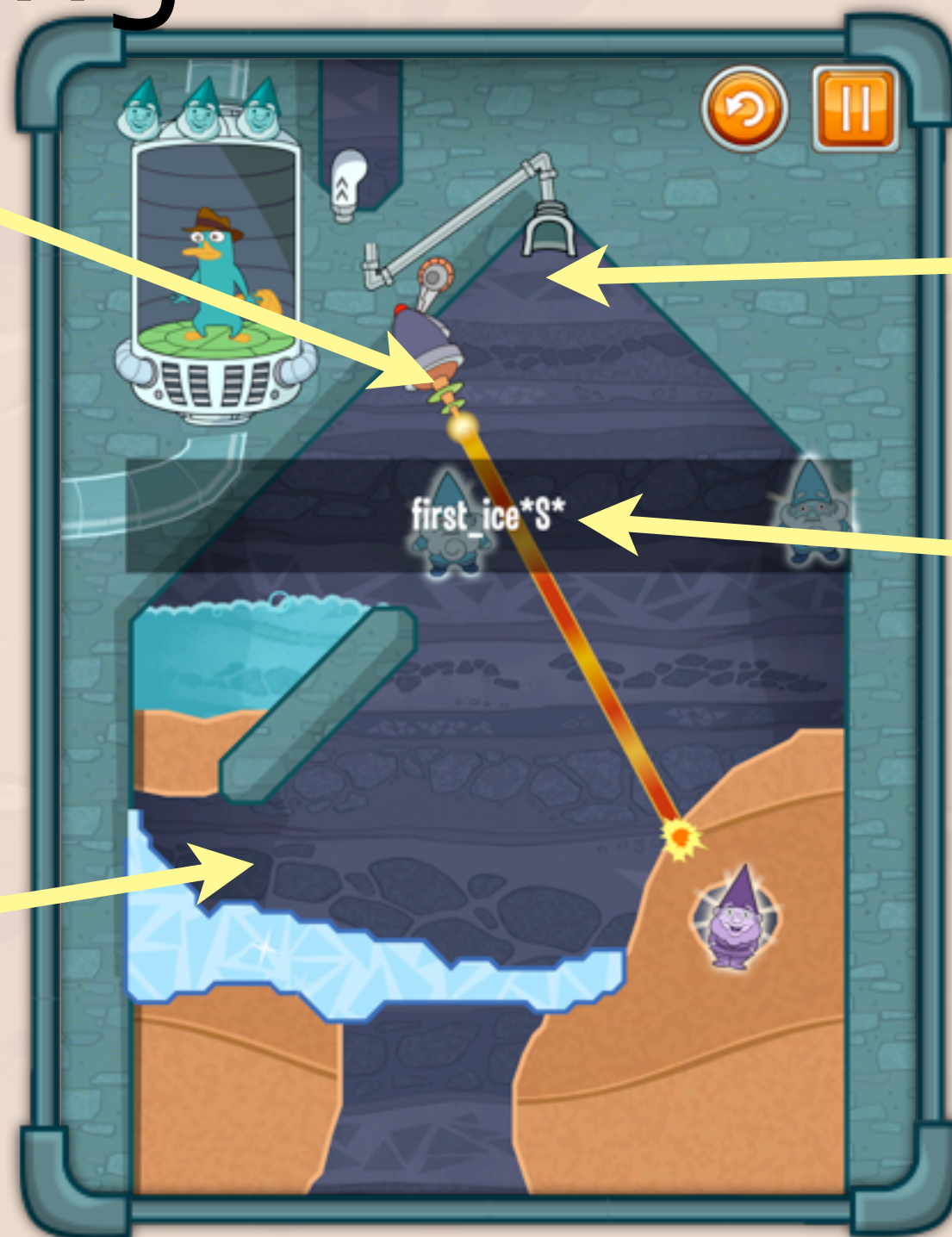
# Bad Teaching

Distractions

Separation from goal

Naming hubris

No time to think



# Good Teaching



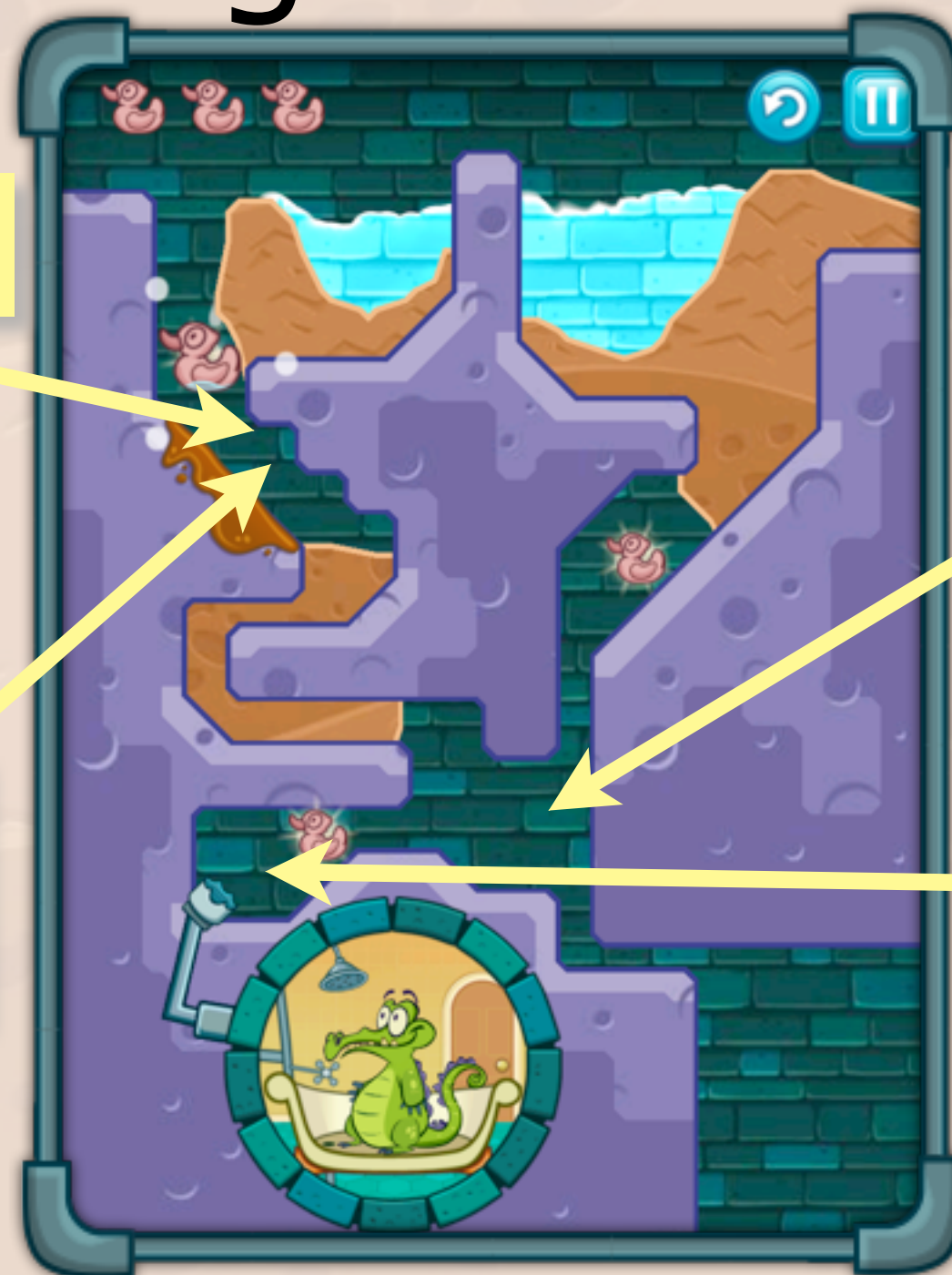




# Good Teaching

Obvious start

The first step **is**  
the lesson



Still a fun puzzle

Obvious ending



# Pack Goal: Variety





# Variety

- Variety is good
- Avoid repetitive themes or puzzle types



# Variety

- Freedom is a dangerous thing.
- Game designers are a dangerous thing.





# Bad Variety

## Crazy Chaos



## Weird Features



## Non-WMW Puzzles





# Xtreme Lurvals





# Surprise Lurvals

Loading...



Concept Lurvals



# Lurvals!

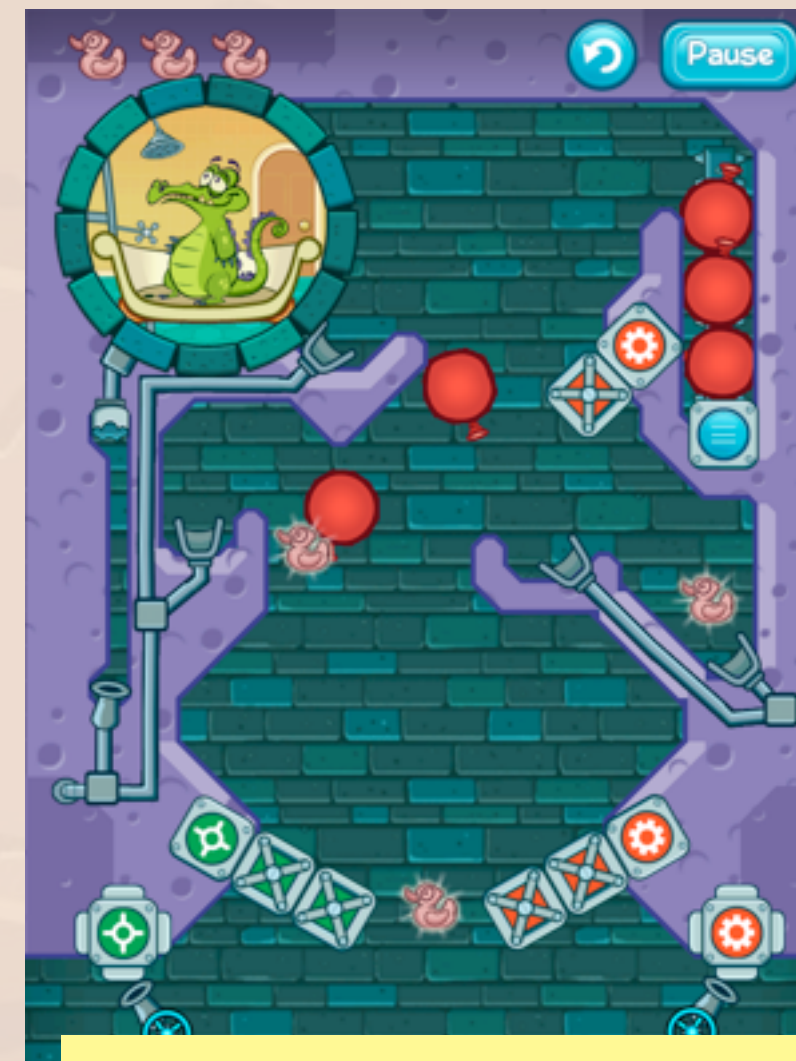


Xtreme Lurvals

Surprise Lurvals



Concept Lurvals





# Pack Goal: Difficulty





# Difficulty

- Pack difficulty should flow evenly



# Difficulty

- Pack difficulty should flow evenly
- But, it's always too hard





# Difficulty

- Pack difficulty should flow evenly
- But, levels tend to start off too hard
- Playtesting is the solution



# Step 4: Playtest





# Playtesting

- Playtesting is a game design task
- The final test of the level and pack goals
  - Teaching
  - Variety
  - Difficulty (especially)



# Playtesting

- Levels tend to start hard



# Playtesting

- Levels tend to start hard
- Playtesters tend to have problems with them
- “Why do I have to dumb down my genius?”





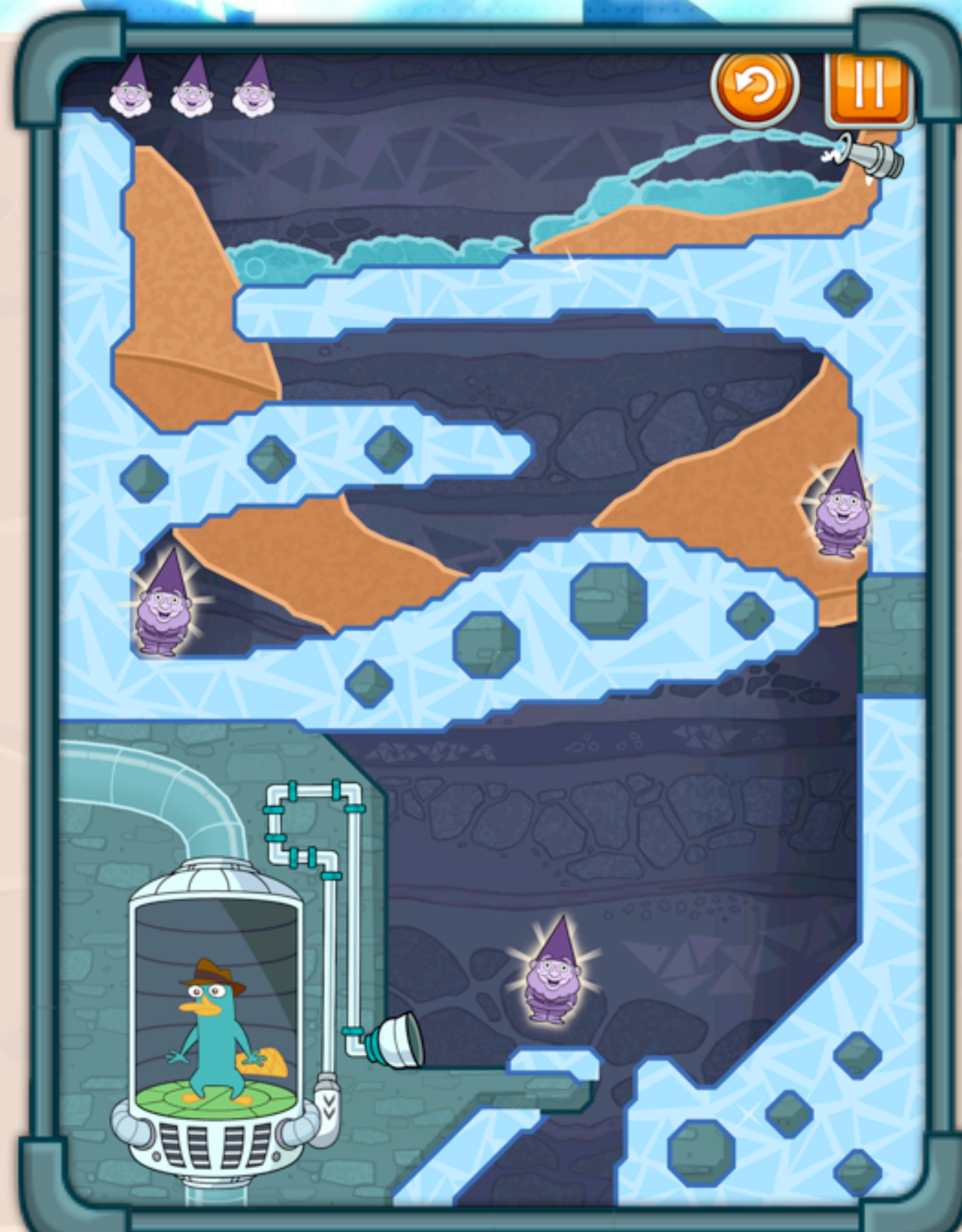
# Playtesting

- Simpler means focused
- Focus means goals are better expressed



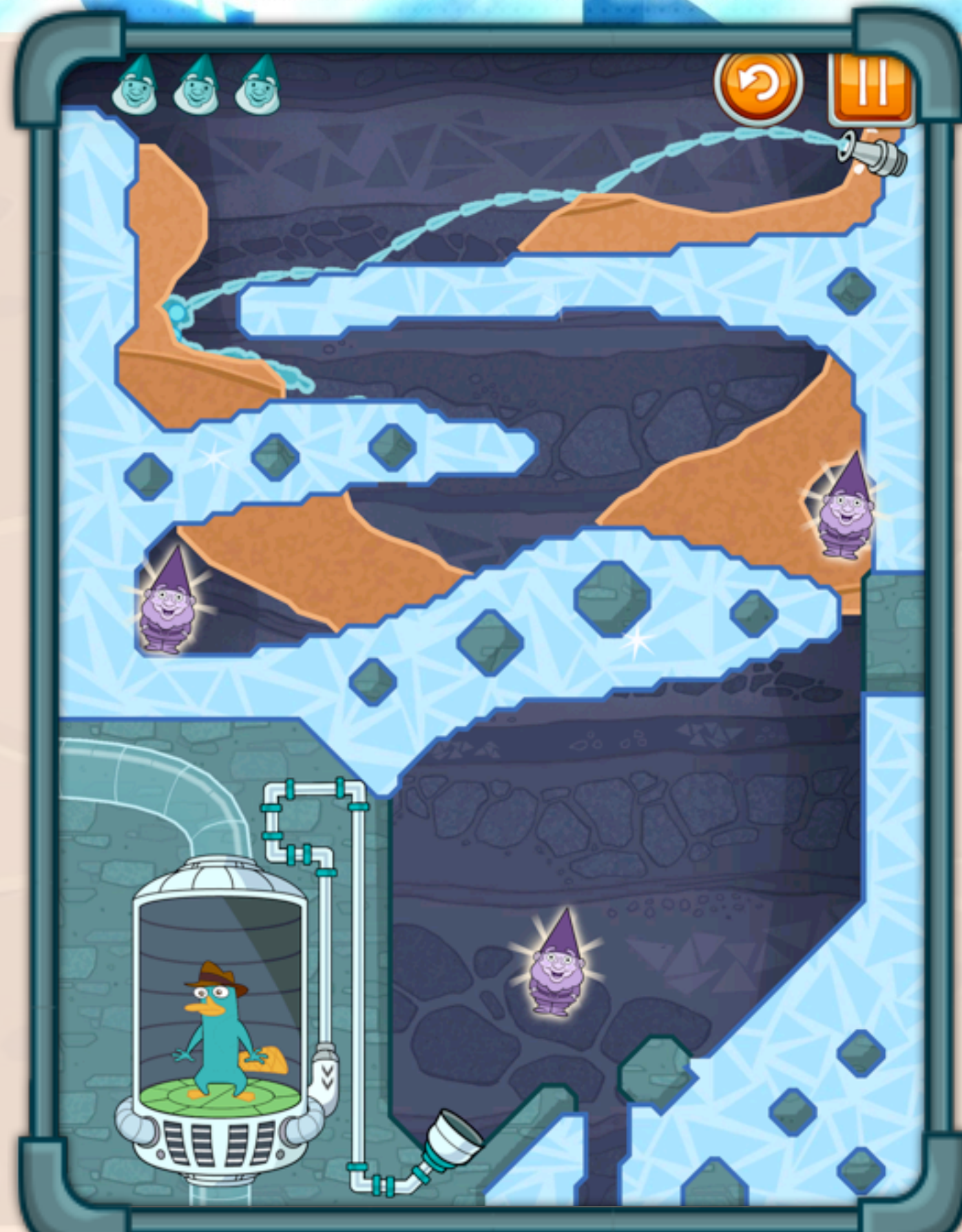


June 14



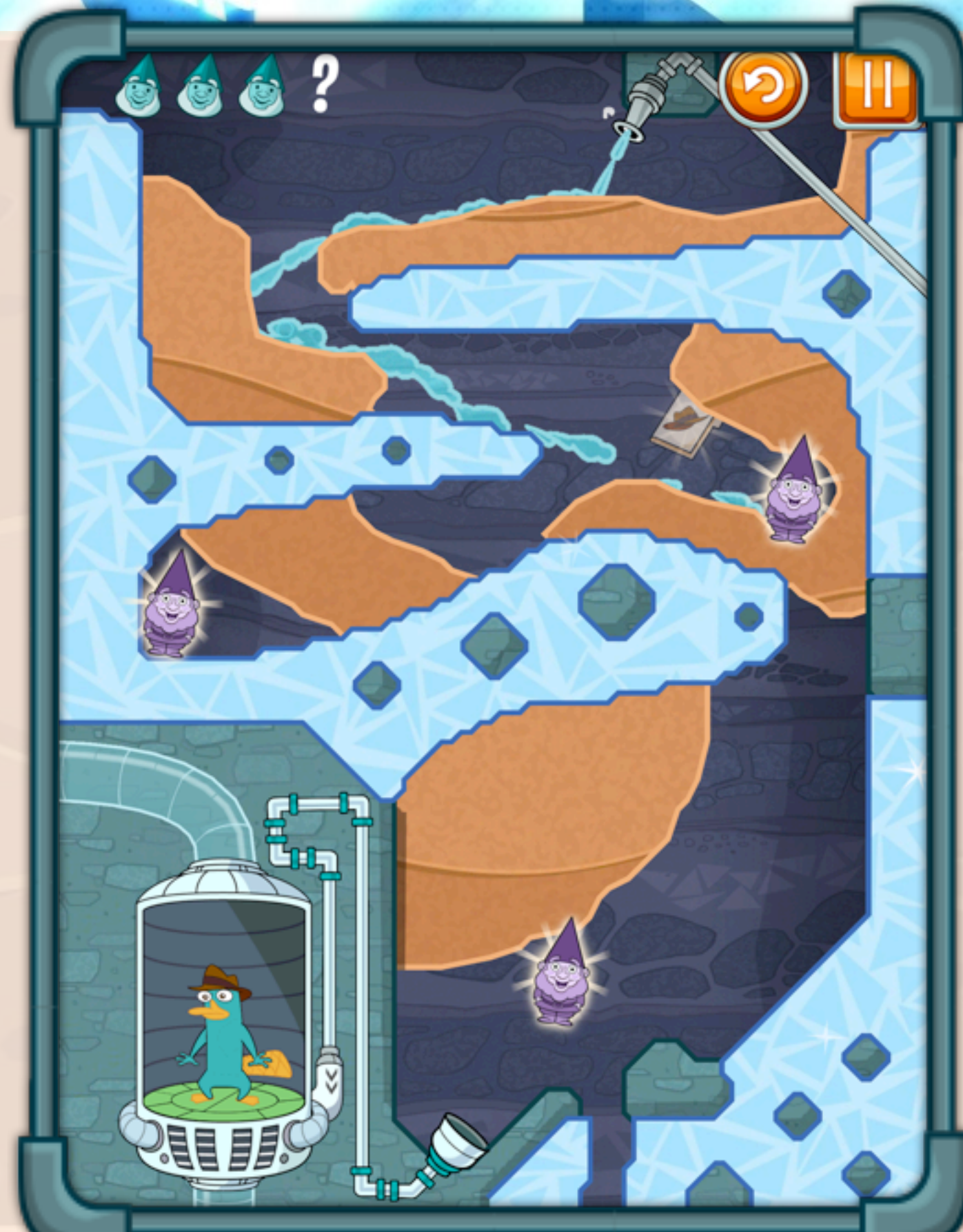


June 20





June 29





## ALL: LEVEL FIXES

Fans

Fan +  
Switch

Varied  
Power

Fans +  
Other  
Fans

Multiple  
Fans

Vacuum  
s

+  
Poison

Goof:  
Circular

+  
Balloon  
s

Lots of  
Switche  
s

Free:  
Timing

Adv:  
Bridges

Free:  
Circular

Lurval:  
Slam  
down

Lurval:  
World

Lurval:  
Suck up

Goof:  
Fans  
bad

Hard

Harder:  
Lurval

Hardest





ALL: LEVEL FIXES

TOO  
HARD -  
simplify

TOO HARD  
- move

Fans

Fan +  
Switch

Varied  
Power

Fans +  
Other  
Fans

Multiple  
Fans

Vacuum  
s

+  
Poison

Goof:  
Circular

+  
Balloon  
s

Lots of  
Switche  
s

Free:  
Timing

Adv:  
Bridges

Free:  
Circular

Lurval:  
Slam  
down

Lurval:  
World

Lurval:  
Suck up

Goof:  
Fans  
bad

Hard

Harder:  
Lurval

Hardest



ALL: LEVEL FIXES

TOO HARD

TOO HARD

NOT TEACHING

Fans

Fan + Switch

Varied Power

Fans + Other Fans

Multiple Fans

Vacuums

+ Poison

Goof: Circular

+ Balloons

Lots of Switches

Free: Timing

Adv: Bridges

Free: Circular

Lurval: Slam down

Lurval: World

Lurval: Suck up

Goof: Fans bad

Hard

Harder: Lurval

Hardest





ALL: LEVEL FIXES

TOO HARD

TOO HARD

NOT TEACHING

Uses a feature without teaching it first

Fans

Fan + Switch

Varied Power

Fans + Other Fans

Multiple Fans

Vacuums

+ Poison

Goof: Circular

+ Balloons

Lots of Switches

Free: Timing

Adv: Bridges

Free: Circular

Lurval: Slam down

Lurval: World

Lurval: Suck up

Goof: Fans bad

Hard

Harder: Lurval

Hardest



# Review Criteria

## Pack Goals:

- Teaching
- Variety
- Difficulty



## Level Goals:

- Fun
- Communication
- Cheese-proof





# Feep Thru

- Things Playtesting Doesn't Catch:
  - Too easy
  - Standards & consistency (Vincent!)
  - Certain types of cheese (Chad!)
  - Relationships to other levels
  - Lack of variety (lurvals!)

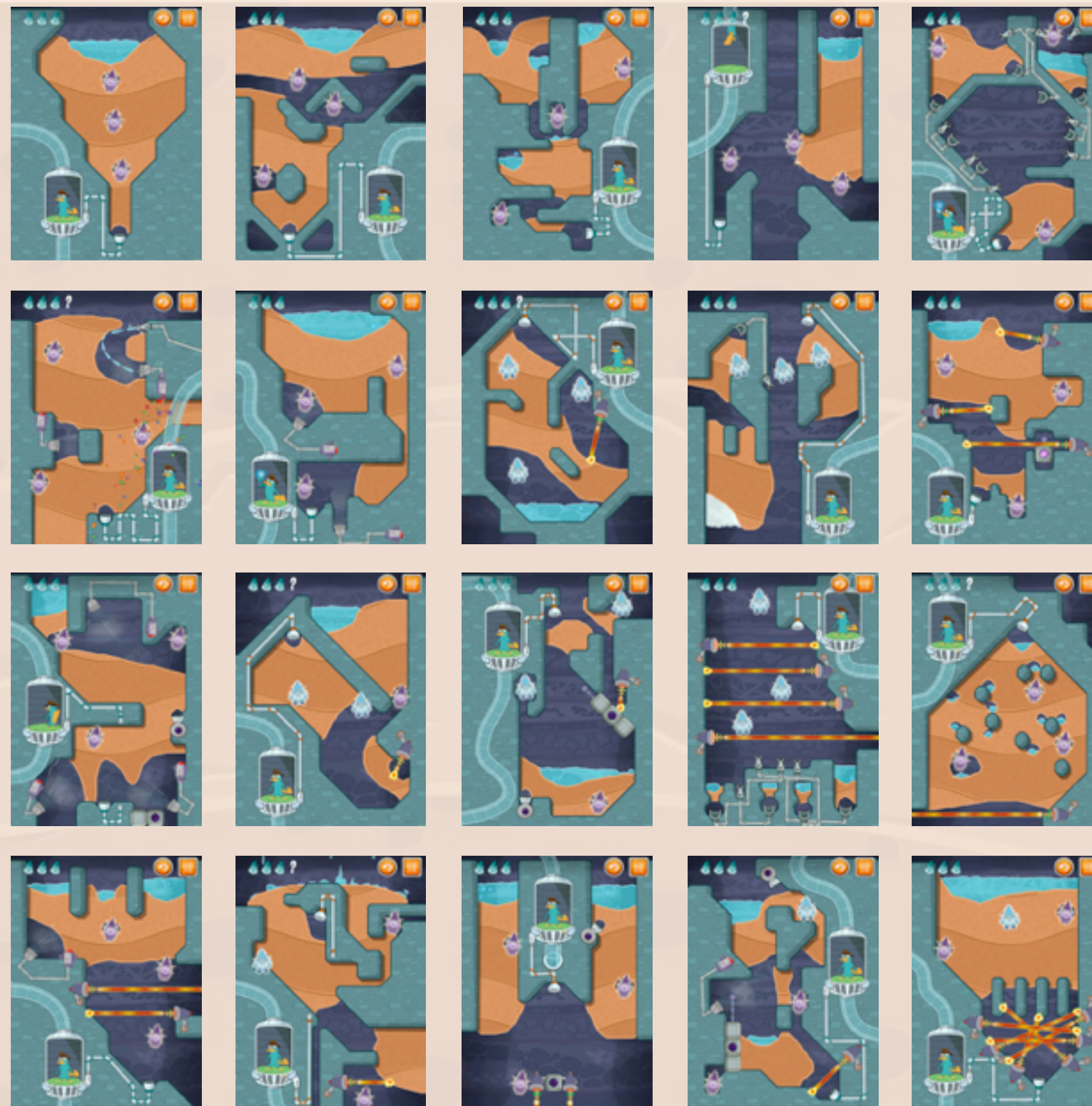




# Beyond Water



# Where's My Perry Pack 1







Basics  
Tutorial

Overfill  
Pre-tut

Overfill

Sloop  
Tutorial

Pipes!

Cele-  
brate  
Tutorial

Cele-  
brate

Red  
Laser  
Tutorial

Steam  
Tutorial

Avoid  
Lasers!

Sneak  
Under

Laser  
Splits

Switch  
Pooling

Lurval:  
Lots of  
Lasers

Lurval:  
Little  
Pools

Tripwire

Rain

Lurval:  
Moving  
Laser

Hard:  
Up and  
Down

Lurval:  
Lots of  
Lasers

Where's  
My Perry  
Pack 1





# Cut the Rope Pack 1







# Cut the Rope Pack 1

 <p>Basics Tutorial</p>	 <p>Swing Tutorial</p>	 <p>Swing!</p>	 <p>Hard Swing!</p>	 <p>Bubble Tutorial</p>
 <p>Bubble!</p>	 <p>Lurval: Lots of Strings</p>	 <p>Bubble + Swing</p>	 <p>Bubble + Swing</p>	 <p>Auto- Rope Tutorial</p>
 <p>Many Ropes</p>	 <p>Stretch Tutorial</p>	 <p>Rope + Bubble</p>	 <p>Bubble + Swing</p>	 <p>First Tall Level</p>
 <p>Spike Tutorial</p>	 <p>Hard: Spikes</p>	 <p>Harder: Spikes</p>	 <p>Hardest : Spikes</p>	 <p>Lurval: One Drop</p>







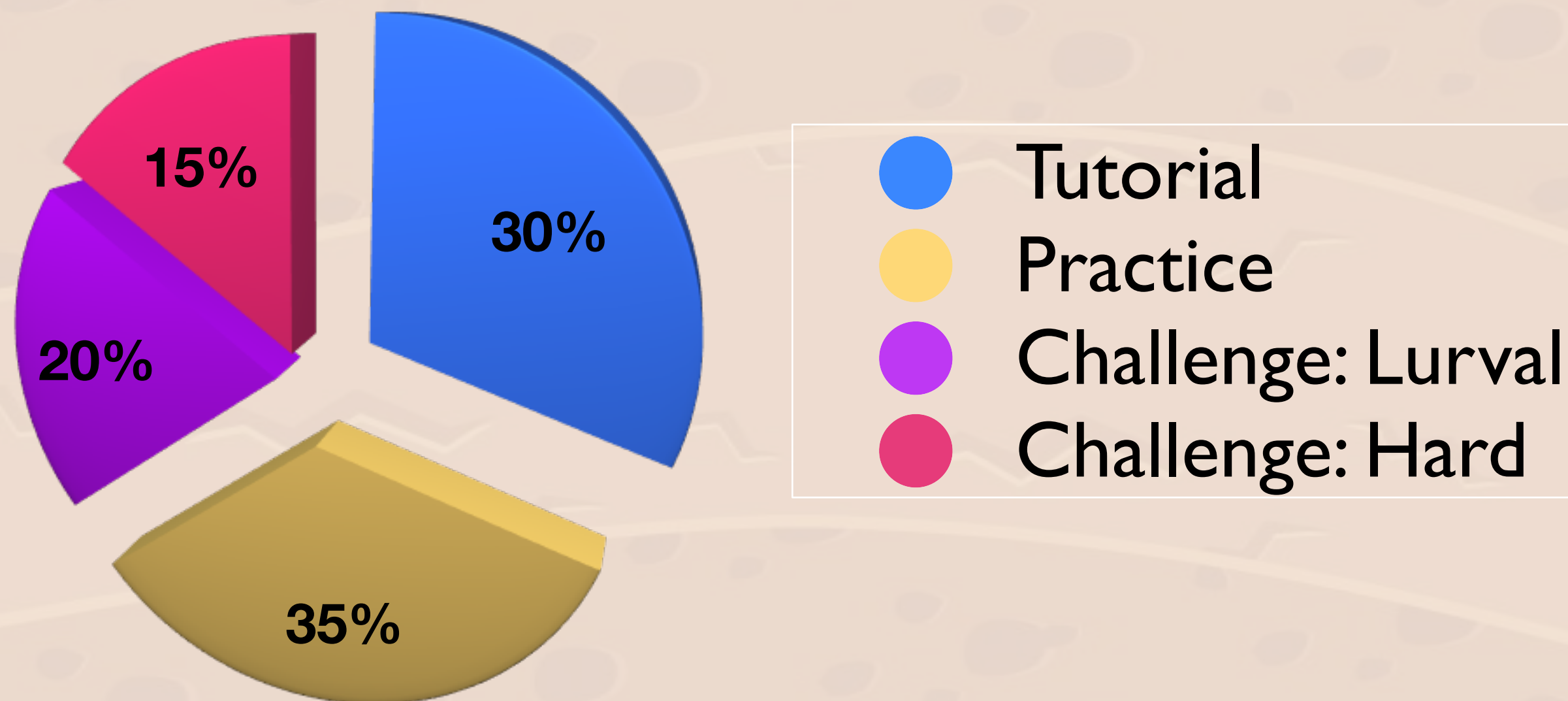


Itsa Tutorial	Heavy Tutorial	Mixed Tutorial	Shooter Tutorial	Floaty Tutorial	Fast Shooter	Pika Quick Attack	Balance	Mr Game & Lurval
Air Lurval	Speedy Goof	Modal Tutorial	Shooter Goof	Floaty Power	Spinny	Split Tutorial	Slow Heavy Goof	Shoot? Shoot! SHOOT!
Floater	Yoshi Goof	Slow Heavy Goof	Double Lurval	Penguin Lurval	Lunge Lurval	Mixed Goof	Air Shooter	Speed
Bigness Lurval	Air Heavy Lurval	Fast	Robo Lurval	Split Pikmin	Delay Goof	Floaty Lurval	Explode Shooter	RANDOM





# Overall Percentages





# Holistic Content Design

- Everything is connected
- Build those connections
- Make great games

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Thank you!

